

# How to Worship Allah ﷻ By His Names



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful







Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you  
in good health and imaan.

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beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts  
with sincerity and gratefulness  
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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## Glossary



جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu  
**Allah the Most Exalted**



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam  
**Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him**

# Importance of Knowing Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes

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*Chapter One*

In this course, we will explore an essential topic that pertains to our worship of Allah ﷻ - the knowledge of Allah's Names and Attributes. This knowledge is indispensable in our daily lives, particularly during the blessed month of Ramadan.

During this month, Muslims worldwide dedicate themselves to extra acts of worship - fasting by day, praying by night, reciting the Qur'an, engaging in abundant dhikr of Allah ﷻ, and performing various other acts of worship.

At the core of this worship lies an understanding of Allah's attributes, particularly His attribute of being الحي القيوم (Al-Hayy Al-Qayyoom) – the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all existence.

In this chapter, let us explore how this profound knowledge of Allah ﷻ intertwines with our worship of Him.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

1

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

**And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allâh, so call on Him by them**

Surah Al-A'raf 180

## The Best Knowledge a Person Can Attain

Scholars say that whenever the term *Du'a* is mentioned in the Qur'an, it refers to one of the two distinct types of supplication:

**A — Du'a al-'Ibadah - supplication for worshipping Allah**

**B — Du'a al-Mas'alah - supplication for asking Allah for something**

In the verse mentioned above in Surah Al-A'raf, both of these meanings are applicable.

It is said that the nobility of a form of knowledge depends on its subject (شرف العلم (بشرف معلومه).

Thus, the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ are the best forms of knowledge that a person can attain because they are connected to the One who is Most High: Allah ﷻ. This is why one can find this knowledge in numerous verses of the Qur'an, where many verses conclude with one of Allah's Names and Attributes.

Let us consider the following verses, for instance:

2

وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

**And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving;**

Surah Al-Mulk 2

3

ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ . فَعَالٍ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ

**Owner of the throne, the Glorious, (He is the) Doer of whatsoever He intends (or will).**

Surah Al-Buruj 15-16

# The Purpose of Creation

As you may already know, we were created to worship Allah ﷻ, and part of that worship involves knowing Him ﷻ through His ﷻ Names and Attributes. The Prophet ﷺ ensured to educate people about these attributes and names, as it is a fundamental aspect of why Allah ﷻ created us.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

- 4

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

**It is Allâh Who has created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof (i.e. seven). His Command descends between them (heavens and earth), that you may know that Allâh has power over all things,**

Surah At-Talaq 12

This highlights that one of the reasons why Allah ﷻ created the heavens, the earth, and everything therein is for us to recognise and understand His ﷻ Divine Names and Attributes.

# Connection Between Worship and Knowledge of Allah's Names and Attributesand Crafting Content

Let us reflect on the following hadith of Mu'adh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه where the Prophet ﷺ sent him to the people of Yemen:

- 5

إِنَّكَ تَقْدَمُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ أَهْلِ كِتَابٍ فَلْيَكُنْ أَوَّلَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ عِبَادَةُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَإِذَا عَرَفُوا اللَّهَ فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ فَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمِهِمْ وَلَيْلَتِهِمْ[...]

**Verily you would reach a community of the people of the Book, the very first thing to which you should call them is the worship of Allah, may His Glory be Magnificent, and when they become fully aware of Allah, instruct them that He has enjoined five prayers on them during the day and the night [...]**

Sahih Muslim 19c

The Prophet ﷺ instructed Mu'adh that the first thing that he should call the people to is to worship Allah ﷻ.

This narration mentions the wording 'فَإِذَا عَرَفُوا اللَّهَ' (meaning "if they know Allah"). This highlights that knowing Allah is a part of worship - rather it is one of the greatest things about worship.

In conclusion, one cannot get to know Allah ﷻ properly without having a good grasp of His ﷻ Names and Attributes. Allah ﷻ has specific Names and Attributes by which He is known, and studying them is the only way to gain a deeper knowledge of Allah ﷻ.



# Rectifying Our Approach to Knowing Allah ﷻ

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*Chapter Two*

Isma'il ibn Muhammad At-Taimi al-Asbahani, also known as 'Qawaam as-Sunnah', is recognised as a prominent scholar in Aqeedah, Hadith, and various other Islamic sciences.

He made a beautiful statement about the knowledge of Allah's Names and attributes:

ولو أراد رجل أن يتزوج إلى رجل أو يزوجه أو يعامله طلب أن يعرف اسمه وكنيته واسم أبيه  
وجده وسأل عن صغير أمره وكبيره. فالله الذي خلقنا ورزقنا ونحن نرجو رحمته ونخاف من  
سخطه أولى أن نعرف أسماءه ونعرف تفسيرها.

**If a man wanted to marry (his daughter, sister, etc.) to another man, or marry (a woman) from his family, or deal with him, he would inquire about his name, surname, the names of his father and grandfather, and ask about his minor and major matters.**

**And Allah is the One who created us and provides for us, and we hope for His mercy and fear His wrath. It is, therefore, more important for us to know His Names and understand their meanings.**

This is a profound statement that shows that when it comes to matters of the Dunya, we diligently resort to googling, researching, and studying them from various sources. However, when it comes to knowing about Allah ﷻ, who created us for this very purpose, we often neglect this duty.

Indeed, it is something that we need to reflect upon and rectify. May Allah ﷻ guide us to righteousness and rectify all our affairs.

# Benefits Of Studying The Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ

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*Chapter Three*

There are numerous benefits of studying the Names and Attributes of Allah.

**A** **Knowing Allah ﷻ**

The greatest benefit, as previously stated, is getting to know Allah ﷻ.

For example, if you make a mistake, from your knowledge of Allah, you know that He is Oft-Forgiving.

Scholars differentiate between **الْغَفُورُ** and **الْغَفَّارُ** noting that the one named with **الْغَفَّارُ** excels in forgiveness, and Allah is attributed with both names.

Besides that, when you know Allah's Names and Attributes, you recognise His capability for inflicting punishment. This awareness instils a sense of fear and caution within you, preventing you from overstepping boundaries, as you understand that Allah ﷻ might punish you for your wrongdoings.

**B** **Deriving Guidance from Allah's Names and Attributes**

Studying Allah's Names and Attributes also provides guidance in matters of knowledge ('Ilm), leading you to correct conclusions.

Let us take the following verse, for instance:

1

وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

**[...] but He wants to purify you, and to complete His Favour to you that you may be thankful.**

Surah Al-Ma'idah 6

Having knowledge of Allah's names enables you to derive rulings for certain issues of Fiqh.

These rulings are intricately tied to the Wisdom of Allah ﷻ, and you can actively seek them out. Some scholars even derive Ahkaam al-Fiqhiyyah directly from these attributes and their associated wisdom.

Let us reflect upon a different example to understand this concept better. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

2

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

**The recompense of those who wage war against Allâh and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite sides, or be exiled from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and a great torment is theirs in the Hereafter.**

Surah Al-Ma'idah 33

In the aforementioned verse, Allah details the punishment for the 'Muhaarab' (محارب) - i.e. an individual who possesses power and influence and rebels against the ruling authority, causing disturbance to people on roads and travellers.



In the next verse, Allah ﷻ says:

3

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

**Except for those who (having fled away and then) came back (as Muslims) with repentance before they fall into your power; in that case, know that Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.**

Surah Al-Ma'idah 34

For these individuals mentioned by Allah, the prescribed punishment is intended unless they repent before they are apprehended. If they repent before they are caught, Allah does not explicitly mention the action to be taken for or against them.

Instead, Allah ﷻ emphasises His attributes of being غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ - the All-Forgiving and the Merciful. This indicates that those who genuinely repent before facing consequences may still be forgiven.

C

### Increasing Your Love for Allah ﷻ

Another benefit of studying Allah's ﷻ Names and Attributes is that it increases our love for Him. Realising that Allah ﷻ legislates matters for our benefit and wants to accept our Tawbah fosters a profound love for Him in our hearts.

Allah ﷻ has shown His blessings upon the believers by sending His Messenger ﷺ from amongst them. This is a blessing from Allah ﷻ and naturally, the human disposition (Fitrah) inclines towards loving the one who bestows blessings upon them.

All the blessings we have are from Allah ﷻ, and they are countless; their number is beyond our ability to enumerate. Recognising this fact deepens our love for Him ﷻ even further.

'Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا reported:

4

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعَثَ رَجُلًا عَلَى سَرِيَّةٍ وَكَانَ يَقْرَأُ لِأَصْحَابِهِ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ فَيَخْتِمُ بِ { قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ } فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا ذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ " سَلُوهُ لَأَيِّ شَيْءٍ يَصْنَعُ ذَلِكَ " . فَسَأَلُوهُ فَقَالَ لَأَنَّهَا صِفَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ فَأَنَا أُحِبُّ أَنْ أَقْرَأَ بِهَا . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَخْبِرُوهُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّهُ " .

**The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent a man in charge of an expedition and he would recite for his Companions during their prayer, ending (recitation) with:" Say, He is God, One." When they returned mention was made of it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).**

**He (the Holy Prophet) told them to ask him why he had done like that.**

**So they asked him and he said: Verily, it is an attribute of the Compassionate One, and (for this reason) I love to recite it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) thereupon said: Inform him that Allah loves him.**

Sahih Muslim 813

In the hadith, the man expressed his love for Surah Al-Ikhlās because it taught him about Allah ﷻ. This Surah, which is equivalent to a third of the Qur'an in terms of rewards, comprises only four verses. Yet, it beautifully describes Allah ﷻ, allowing us to know our Lord. This knowledge creates a special bond between the servant and Allah, increasing the servant's love for Allah ﷻ even further.

### **D Relying on Allah ﷻ**

Another benefit of studying and understanding the names of Allah is that it instils a sense of certainty and tranquillity, a stronger sense of Tawakkul (تَوَكَّلُ) and reliance upon Allah ﷻ.

Relying on Allah ﷻ, our Lord, supported by knowledge strengthens our faith. For example, knowing that Allah ﷻ is Ar-Razzaq (الرَّزَّاقُ) - the Provider of sustenance (Rizq), instils trust in His ability to provide for us.

This understanding gives us a deep sense of certainty that Allah is the ultimate Provider. Even if others try to interfere with or disrupt our sustenance (Rizq), we find peace in reminding ourselves that they can never diminish what Allah ﷻ intends to bestow upon us.

Relying on the creation can often leave you feeling unsettled and doubtful. True tranquillity and calmness can only be found in reliance upon the Creator rather than the creation.

Placing our trust in the Creator, who controls everything, is what brings a sense of peace that cannot be attained through reliance on anything or anyone else.

# Worshipping Allah ﷻ By His Names And Attributes

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*Chapter Four*

In conclusion, let us focus on how we can worship Allah ﷻ by his Names and Attributes, and how we apply this knowledge in our daily lives.

Let us bring back the verse that we mentioned previously. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

1

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

**And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allâh, so call on Him by them**

Surah Al-A'raf 180

Let us reflect upon the following hadith that is key to understanding how to worship Allah ﷻ by His Names and Attributes:

2

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا مِائَةً إِلَّا وَاحِدًا مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

**Verily, there are ninety-nine names for Allah, i. e. hundred excepting one. He who enumerates them would get into Paradise.**

Sahih Muslim 2677b

## 1 — Are There Only Ninety-Nine Names of Allah ﷻ?

The majority of scholars, such as Imam an-Nawawi in his explanation of Sahih Muslim, mention that the actual number of names of Allah ﷻ exceeds ninety-nine.

However, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned these specific ninety-nine names as having a special reward for those who remember and invoke them. It is important to note that these ninety-nine names can be any selection one comes across.

Imam Abu Sulayman Al Khattabi presents an insightful analogy. He says that if one says, “Zayd has 100 dirhams that he has prepared for Sadaqah”, it does not imply that Zayd only has these 100 dirhams.

Likewise, the meaning or interpretation that we take from the hadith is that the one who memorises these ninety-nine names by heart will enter Paradise, but it does not mean that Allah ﷻ only has ninety-nine names.

## 2 — What Does إحصاء Mean?

There are two opinions regarding this issue:

- Some scholars suggest that إحصاء simply refers to memorisation of the ninety-nine names. According to this view, anyone who memorises these names from the Qur'an and Sunnah, without necessarily understanding their meanings or acting upon them, will enter into Paradise.
- Many scholars have contested against and weakened the first opinion. Imam Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar, for instance, criticises this viewpoint. He mentions that it could potentially allow even non-Muslims or hypocrites (Munaafiqoon) to memorise the names and gain the reward mentioned in the hadith.

Other scholars emphasise that mere memorisation of Allah's Names is insufficient; rather, one must memorise, understand and act upon them.



- Imam Abu ‘Umar at-Talamanki mentioned that the individual who has truly understood the names of Allah ﷻ is the one who knows their meanings, recognises the benefits (فوائد) they bring and comprehends the deeper realities they imply.

### 3 — How Do You Act Upon The Names of Allah ﷻ?

Ibn Battal offers an excellent explanation in his Sharh of Sahih al-Bukhari. He says that it is insufficient to merely know the names of Allah; one must also understand their meanings. Furthermore, he suggests dividing the names into different categories.

For instance, there are certain names that Allah loves to see his servant act upon them in terms of exemplifying them.

Such as:

- **Al-'Afuww (الْعَفُوُّ) - The Oft-Pardoning**
- **Al-Karim (الْكَرِيمُ) - The Generous One**
- **At-Tawwab (التَّوَّابُ) - The Acceptor of Repentance**
- **Ash-Shakoor (الشَّكُّورُ) - The Most-Appreciative**

He further adds that there are certain names of Allah ﷻ which are not appropriate for servants to directly emulate or act upon, given the unique attributes and characteristics they signify.

Certain names of Allah ﷻ are exclusive to Him as the Lord of the Heavens and the earth, and attempting to directly emulate or act upon them is not suitable for His servants. Instead, we should acknowledge these names, affirm Allah's worthiness of them, and submit to Him.

Such as:

- **Al-Jabbaar (الْجَبَّارُ) - The Compeller**
- **Al-Muta‘ali (الْمُتَعَالِي) - The Supremely Exalted**
- **Al-Mutakabbir (الْمُتَكَبِّرُ) - The Dominant One**

Some names of Allah entail aspects related to punishment, which is given to those who deserve it based on their actions and deeds.

These names should inspire the servant to remain within Allah's prescribed limits, refraining from actions that may lead to transgression and disobedience.

Such as:

- **Al-'Azeez (الْعَزِيزُ) - The Mighty**
- **Al-Muntaqim (الْمُنْتَقِمُ) - The Avenger**
- **Saree‘ al-Hisaab (سريع الحساب) - The One Who Gives A Swift Reckoning**

## 4 — Making Du’a With Allah’s Names

Ibn Battal suggests that making supplications (du'a) using Allah's names is highly beneficial. Each name of Allah carries specific meanings.

For instance:

- **If you are asking Allah for provision, the suitable name would be Ar-Razzaq (الرَّزَّاقُ) - The Provider**
- **When asking Allah for forgiveness, the suitable name would be Al-Ghafoor (الْغَفُورُ) - The Forgiving**
- **If you are asking for Allah’s mercy, the suitable name would be Ar-Raheem (الرَّحِيمُ) - The Merciful**

This understanding of how to make Du’a using the names of Allah ﷻ is one of the reasons contributing to the acceptance of our Du'a.

Shaykh Ibn al-Qayyim mentions in his book Ad Daa Wad Dawaa’ that one of the reasons for acceptance of a Du'a is that when we invoke the names of Allah ﷻ in our supplications, we draw nearer to Him by acknowledging His attributes.

To conclude, let us summarise how to worship Allah ﷻ with His Names and Attributes:

- First and foremost, we must align our actions with the meanings of Allah's names. Certain names call for us to actively emulate their attributes, while others necessitate acceptance and submission to Allah's will. Additionally, some names evoke a sense of fear, reminding us of the consequences of disobedience.
- By acting upon and understanding Allah’s Names, we should intend to seek Allah's pleasure.
- Finally, we should strive to utilise the Names and Attributes of Allah ﷻ in our supplications (Du'a).



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